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Listing of Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the subject application:

1. (currently amended) A method of detecting Parkinson's disease (PD) through MRI of brain tissue that includes substantia nigra pars compacta tissue comprising:

obtaining a gray matter suppressed (GMS) MRI signal of brain tissue that includes said SNC tissue;

obtaining a white matter suppressed (WMS) MRI signal of brain tissue that includes said SNC tissue;

combining processing information from said GMS and WMS MRI signals so as to produce and present resultant signals indicative of PD.

2. (original) A method as in claim 1 in which said obtaining of each of the GMS and WMS MRI signals comprises using an inversion recovery (IR) pulse sequence.

3. (currently amended) A method as in claim 2 including forming GMS and WMS MRI images using information from said GMS and WMS MRI signals, respectively, and wherein said combining processing step comprises combining processing at least portions of said GMS and WMS images.

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4. (currently amended) A method as in claim 3 in which said combining processing comprises obtaining a ratio image of at least portions of said GMS and WMS images for at least one MRI slice.

5. (currently amended) A method as in claim 4 further comprising processing selected medial and lateral regions of interest in each ratio image to derive a numerical measure indicative indicate of the presence and/or staging of PD.

6. (original) A method as in claim 1 further including using the resultant signals to stage PD.

7. (original) A method as in claim 1 including plotting the resultant signals in a two-dimensional plot in which markers for patients with PD appear in an area different from that for patient without PD.

8. (currently amended) A method as in claim 7 in which the markers for patient with PD appear in different areas of the plot corresponding to different stages of PD.

9. (previously presented) A method as in claim 1 including causing said resultant signals to be indicative of a relative loss of MRI signal from lateral as compared with medial portions of the SNc.

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10. (currently amended) A method of detecting Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP) through MRI of brain tissue that includes substantia nigra pars compacta compacta (SNC) tissue comprising:

obtaining a gray matter suppressed (GMS) MRI signal of brain tissue that includes said SNC tissue;

obtaining a white matter suppressed (WMS) MRI signal of brain tissue that includes said SNC tissue;

combining processing information from said GMS and WMS MRI signals to produce a and present resultant signals indicative of PSP.

11. (previously presented) A method as in claim 10 including causing said resultant signals to be indicative of a relative loss of MRI signal from medial as compared with lateral portions of the SNC.

12. (currently amended) A method of distinguishing between two forms of parkinsonism radiographically, Parkinson's disease (PD) and Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP) through MRI of brain tissue that includes substantia nigra pars compacta compacta (SNC) tissue comprising:

obtaining at least two starting MRI images of brain tissue that includes said SNC tissue using different MRI parameters;

combining processing the starting images to compute and present resultant signals differentiating between PD and PSP.

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13. (currently amended) A method as in claim 12 in which the at least two starting images comprise a gray matter suppressed (GMS) MRI image and a white matter suppressed (WMS) MRI image of brain tissue that includes said SNC tissue in the same MRI slice.

14. (original) A method as in claim 13 in which each of said GMS and WMS image is obtained using an inversion-recovery MRI pulse sequence.

15. (currently amended) A method of detecting Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP) through MRI of brain tissue that includes substantia nigra pars compacta comparts (SNC) tissue comprising:

obtaining at least two starting MRI images of brain tissue that includes said SNC tissue using different MRI parameters;

combining processing the starting images and computing and presenting resultant signals indicative of and identifying PSP.

16. (currently amended) A method as in claim 15 in which the at least two starting images comprise a gray matter suppressed (GMS) MRI image and a white matter suppressed (WMS) MRI image of brain tissue that includes said SNC tissue in the same MRI slice.

17. (currently amended) A method as in claim 16 in which each of said GMS and WMS image is obtained using an inversion-recovery MRI pulse sequence